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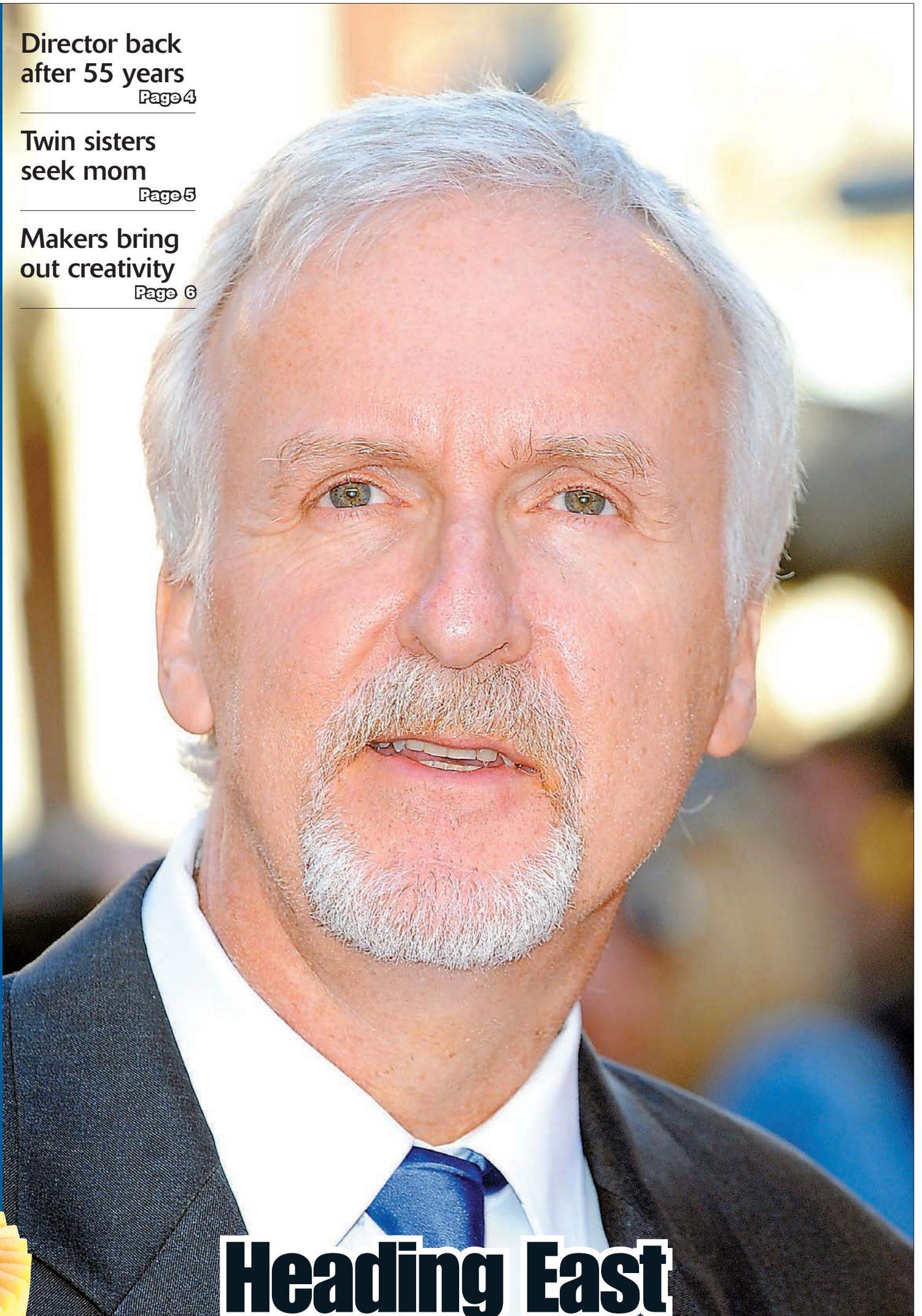
Page 13

北京青年报
BEIJING YOUTH DAILY

Director back
after 55 years
Page 4

Twin sisters
seek mom
Page 5

Makers bring
out creativity
Page 6



Heading East

Director James Cameron's appearance at the Beijing Film Academy whipped up a frenzy.

Hundreds of students camped out at the college's screening room last week to welcome the director. Cameron, for his part, seemed unfazed by the wild enthusiasm and asked his fans – whom he called “future filmmakers” – not to idolize him.

“To become excellent filmmakers, you need to shoot life itself. Find your own voice: that's the most important thing there is,” the

58-year-old film master, who directed the epic romance *Titanic* and sci-fi hit *Avatar*, said.

“Once you've done that, you don't need to idolize anyone.”

Cameron came to China for the 2nd Beijing International Film Festival last week and hoped to establish cooperative partnerships with Chinese filmmakers.

Read more about the festival on Pages 8-9

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Price hike could damage tourism

By Zhao Hongyi

During the three-day International Labor Day holiday, dozens of scenic spots across the country raised the price of entrance between 20 and 60 percent, according to the *Economic Reference Daily*.

Three years ago, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) put a three-year ban on price hikes.

With the ban ended, the country is seeing rapid inflation in almost every product, from food and energy to entertainment.



Price hikes at parks have many tourists trimming their vacation plans.
Zheng Shuai/CFP Photo

Yang Jinyue, a member of the Nanchang Travel Agency in Jiangxi Province, lamented that many scenic spots in his province have upped their entrance fee to 100 yuan – about two days' pay for most workers.

"Sightseeing has become unaffordable for most wage earners," he said.

The sudden price increase came after the National Development and Reform Commission's (NDRC) three-year ban on price hikes came to an end. With parks once again free to re-evaluate their fees, most are raising the cost of admission.

In Zhengding, Hebei Province, the Temple of Zhao Yun and Xinglong Temple were among the first to hike their ticket fees.

Jinggangshan Mountain Spot in Jiangxi Province, a major military base of the Chinese Communist Party in its early years, as well as Mt. Taishan and Cape Penglai in Shandong Province, have also raised their fees.

Scenic spots are not alone. Many urban parks, including the botanical garden of Wuhan, Hubei Province and the zoo in Shijiazhuang, Hebei Province, are also raising the cost of admission.

The botanical garden raised the cost of admission from 30 yuan to 50, and the zoo in Shijiazhuang raised its tickets from 40 yuan to 50.

The ancient Tai'erzhuang Village, a battlefield where Chinese troops fought the Japanese in 1938, raised its admission fee from 100 yuan to 160.

In some cases, the cost of admission has more than doubled.

Zhangjiajie Natural Park in Hunan Province raised its entrance fee from 158 yuan to 248: three times the price of the Musée du Louvre in Paris, which charges roughly 83 yuan.

Mogaoku Grottoes in Gansu Province raised its ticket price from 80 yuan to 160, and Huangshan in Anhui Province

from 130 yuan to 230.

At 200 yuan, admission to these parks is more expensive than admission to Yellowstone National Park in the US, Mt. Fuji in Japan and the Taj Mahal in India.

But the Chinese sites' services lag far behind those of these world-renowned tourist sites.

Other examples include Jiuzhaigou Ethnic Park in Sichuan Province, which doubled its admission fee to 240 yuan, and Shouxi Lake Park in Yangzhou, Jiangsu Province, which doubled its price to 120 yuan.

"We have invested 4 billion yuan in expansion, renovation and decoration over the past few years," Bian Weimin, director of Shouxi Lake Park, said in a panel on China Central TV (CCTV). "The price increase can add 30 to 40 million yuan in new revenue and ease our operational pressure."

Many spots are raising their fees only during the peak season. Mt. Jiuhua in Anhui Province is charging 190 yuan during top tourist months and 140 yuan in the off season.

Staffs of the Temple of Confucius in Qufu, Shandong Province, said their temple's inclusion as a UNESCO world cultural heritage site justifies their new 150 yuan admission fee.

Among 135 national scenic spots, nearly half are charging more than 100 yuan: 10 percent charge more than 200 yuan.

In many cities and counties, income from tourist sites is the cornerstone of the local economy.

But what makes tourists upset is that these fee increases have come without any improvement in service: many parks are actually shrinking the number of services they offer.

Expensive food, a lack of toilets and chairs and a total absence of potable water are the standard at most national scenic spots.

Park managers blame the problems on "too many tourists."

"It has become a routine trick," said Ding Zaixian, vice chairman of Shandong Tourism Trade Association. "They raise their fees during the peak season without thinking about whether they will be sustainable."

The price hikes have caused difficulties for many travel agencies.

"We have to trim down some of our holiday tours because the price of admission is too high for our clients," Yang Jinyue said.

The scenic spots and tourist sites say the fees hikes are necessary to support the high cost of maintenance and lack of other ways to collect money.

"Nevertheless, it is harmful to the long-term development of the tourism industry," said Wang Jun, professor of social sciences at Peking University.

Industry observers say any solution the industry adopts must be healthy and sustainable.

"The price raising has its reasons,"

While there may be good arguments for raising the cost of admission, Dai Bin, president of the China Tourism Academy, said the sites have forgotten their duty as providers of public goods and services.

"The average cost of a tourist site should not exceed 1 percent of an average person's monthly income," he said. "In China, they have gone far beyond that."

Dai suggested they appeal to the government for more financial support, while Chen Guozhong, president of Shandong Tourism Planning & Design Academy, said more commercial services could be part of a solution.

"The government should pin the cost of admission for these tourist sites to a percentage of the average Chinese household income," said Lou Jiajun, a professor of tourism at East China Normal University.

Brief

Bus hijacker under control

Police in Wuhan, Hubei Province said they subdued the man who hijacked a bus on Monday evening.

Eight passengers were rescued and the explosives the man carried have been removed, according to a Wuhan police officer.

The man, who carried explosives and a knife, hijacked the bus carrying eight passengers at 6:30 pm, said the officer.

Police said they are still investigating the case.

Man arrested for bomb threat hoax

A man was arrested on suspicion of making a bomb threat at Shanghai Pudong International Airport last Friday in Sichuan Province.

The airport received an anonymous phone call at 6:36 pm last Friday saying that a bomb was on board flight CA406, police said.

Police evacuated the passengers to inspect the plane and later discovered the threat was a hoax and that there was no explosive device.

The flight, scheduled to take off at 6:30 pm, suffered a five-hour delay.

The Shanghai police detained the suspect, surnamed Pu, in the city of Guangyuan in Sichuan Province on Sunday night after their initial investigation.

Elephant fights back at visitor

A visitor was slightly injured at the Wuhan Zoo on April 30 when an elephant returned fire after another visitor hit it with a stone, the *Hubei-based Wuhan Evening News* reported.

A male visitor to the zoo threw a stone at an elephant at around 10 am. The elephant fought back by throwing a rock back in the direction of the visitor.

Unfortunately, the elephant's aim was somewhat off. The stone flew over the three-meter fence and struck a woman. The woman screamed after the impact, but was reportedly not injured. Zoo staff advised her to go to the hospital.

It is not the first time this elephant has fought back against an assailant. A similar incident happened in 2007, prompting the zoo to erect the three-meter fence.

(Agencies)

Graft in the virtual world

Taobao scandal stirs sensation



Taobao employees reportedly conspired with shop owners to cheat customers.

Yan Shu/CFP Photo

Some employees at Taobao.com, the country's largest online marketplace, have reportedly conspired with business owners to cheat consumers.

IT Time Weekly, a Chinese commercial magazine, reported on April 20 that some employees at Taobao, a unit of Alibaba Group, have taken bribes from online shop owners and secretly helped them remove consumers' malicious comments and boost their credit ratings.

The story also reported that some employees misused advertising tools on the Taobao transaction platform, and some have even started their own businesses to reap hefty but illegal profits.

Such corruption extends from individual employees to the whole company, including staff, technicians and project planners, *IT Time Weekly* reported.

"This has become the biggest obstacle for Taobao to conduct online business transactions on a level playing field," it said.

Although the validity of the accusation has not been confirmed, the news was forwarded and commented on more than 10,000 times on Sina Weibo.

"I don't know who I should believe, because Internet shop owners may sell some inferior-quality products online as long as they have personal relationships with Taobao employees," a netizen "tulip" wrote on Sina Weibo, China's most popular microblogging platform.

Taobao, an investment by Alibaba Group in 2003, boasted more than 400 million users in early 2011 and annual sales revenue of 600 billion yuan (\$95.5 billion), accounting for 80 percent of the coun-

try's online commerce.

As the largest online marketplace, Taobao is responsible for more than 8 million express parcels delivered each day, or 60 percent of the country's total shipping volume, according to statistics released by the company at the end of 2011.

Tao Ran, vice president of Alibaba Group, responded to the scandal in an interview with Xinhua.

"As Taobao is like a virtual society, it is unavoidable for some businessmen to obtain illegal profits by getting involved in bribery," Tao said. "People sometimes get lost when faced with the temptation of money, but they are the minority."

Wang Shuai, chief marketing officer of Alibaba Group, wrote in tweets that Taobao had not accepted any interview from *IT Time Weekly*.

Taobao has refused the magazine's advertisement requests during the past eight years, so it is frequently singled out for negative coverage, Wang said.

"We will maintain our integrity throughout our rapid development. It is the basis for the survival and growth of our company and online business," Tao said, adding that the company was daring enough to expose its own scandals.

The company set up a department of integrity in 2010 to handle reports on illegal activities by Taobao employees.

Members of the company's senior management resigned or were dismissed on suspicion of fraud during the past two years.

The company also promised to come up with more effective rules in the near future to prevent corruption and regulate behaviors of online merchants.

(Xinhua)

Analysis

Disputes a sign that e-commerce is 'coming of age'

By Huang Daohen

It is not the first time that Taobao came under for a controversial move.

Last October, thousands of small vendors in Taobao formed an anti-Taobao union to protest against the company's fee hikes.

As part of its new strategy, Taobao announced it would raise its annual membership fee from 6,000 yuan to between 30,000 and 60,000 yuan.

The price hike led many vendors who had small-scale businesses in its Taobao Mall to believe the company was in cahoots with big-name brands. They ganged up and raided the larger vendors, taking out massive orders and clogging up the network with returns.

The protest continued until the government stepped in and pushed Taobao to delay its policy change.

But to Steven Kang, an industrial analyst with Oriental Securities in Beijing, such disputes in Taobao are signs of the major changes happening within the country's e-commerce industry.

"Blame it on the industry's 'coming of age,'" Kang said.

E-commerce developed rapidly during the last decade, generating an

annual turnover of more than 4 trillion yuan. However, it remained largely self-regulated.

Relevant laws remain sketchy, and many areas of the industry are entirely ignored by the government, Kang said.

"When a dispute occurs and does make it to court, insufficient evidence and holes in the law ensure it will be thrown out," he said.

In Taobao's early years, its founder and CEO Jack Ma acted as a moderator when disputes arose between Taobao's users and vendors. But finding a solution that all the parties could accept was often troublesome.

Kang said the government will enforce new regulations in the country's booming e-commerce sector. "Only by implementing strict laws can it be possible for the sector to solve disputes and eradicate corruption," he said.

Celine Zhou, a shop owner who sells women's dresses on Taobao, said she agreed.

"Most Taobao employees I know are kind and warm-hearted, though I have also heard stories of corruption," Zhou said. "Still, a better oversight system is needed to promote the healthy development of the industry."

Market watch

Luxury cars go to young Chinese

The luxury sports cars worth tens of millions of yuan at the Beijing Auto Show 2012 – which many thought were only for show – were in fact reserved long ago by Chinese in their early 30s.

Xinhua reported that the Aston Martins and Lamborghinis were reserved in advance of the exhibition, as was a 40-million-yuan (\$6.4 million) custom Bugatti.

Mysterious buyers showed up at the pavilion and were invited to VIP rooms by salespeople. While many are suspected to be celebrities, most luxury buyers are believed to be the children of tycoons. The buyers placed their orders after-hours to prevent any scene.

"Tycoons now are young and insensitive to price," said one auto show worker.

The buyer of a Vitesse – a new Bugatti model costing 40 million yuan – was reportedly about 30 years old. He will go to France in person to customize his car, which will include a genuine leather interior designed by Hermes.

Sina says it can't enforce 'real-name' policy

Domestic Internet giant Sina admitted in a Nasdaq filing that it has not been able to implement the "real-name" registration policy required on its popular microblogging service Sina Weibo.

The government demanded that Sina and other microblog operators compel users to register with their real names in March amid fears that the services could be used to "spread rumors."

"Although we have made significant efforts to comply with the verification requirements, for reasons including existing user behavior, the nature of the microblogging product and the lack of clarity on specific implementation procedures, we have not been able to verify the identities of all of the users who post content publicly on Weibo," Sina said in the note to investors.

Sina said that Weibo could be harmed or shut down if the authorities decide to restrict the spread of information via microblogging services in the future.

"We believe successful implementation of user identity verification needs to be done over a long period of time to ensure a positive user experience. However, we may not be able to control the timing of such action, and, if the government enforces compliance in the near term, such action may severely reduce Weibo user traffic," the statement said.

Sina said it has no choice but to hire more employees to monitor content. The move will increase the company's operating costs.

(Agencies)

'Godmother' of New Wave film revisits China



Varda shot some of the photos at the exhibition 55 years ago.

By Han Manman

Eighty-four-year-old French director Agnès Varda's artistic career has spanned over 50 years. She owns various identities, from photographer to acclaimed "godmother" of New Wave film to installation artist, specifically on feminist and social issues.

The veteran of French cinema recently wrapped up her one-month journey in China with her exhibition, which included some of the photos from the trip she took to China 55 years ago.

The exhibition featured the major retrospective of her work including photos, films and installations. Some of her most famous installations, such as the heart-shaped potatoes she collected and her half-century-old pictures of China, were taken in 1957 during her first trip to China.

Varda said she noticed that almost all the backdrop for her photos of 55 years ago have disappeared, especially in big cities.

She said the State Archives Administration in China would like copies of her photos. At the time, she gave many pictures to the government, but over the years they were lost. She has agreed to provide replacements.

"This time I'm only staying in big cities like Beijing and Shanghai, but I wish I could go to the countryside," Varda told *Shanghai Daily*. "I don't even know if I am in China now – buildings, freeways, KFC and McDonald's everywhere. For me it is a shame that modernization has killed the pleasure."

"People like to travel because they want to see something that looks like the last century, but in Beijing



Eighty-four-year-old French director Agnès Varda is called the "godmother" of New Wave film.

CFP Photos

we have no idea what China looked like before. I could not find anything that I saw 55 years ago," she said.

Born in 1928 in Belgium to Greek parents, Varda moved to France with her family in 1940 and studied at the *ecole du Louvre* with a focus on art history and at *ecole des Beaux-Arts* with a focus on photography.

She then worked as a photographer at the *Theatre National Populaire* in

Paris before trying her hand at movies. She directed her first feature film, *La Pointe Courte*, in 1954 as a 26-year-old photographer who supposedly had seen less than a dozen movies in her life.

"Her simplistic but courageous approach and poetic aesthetic made her a fixture among New Wave filmmakers such as François Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard, in the late 1950s and 1960s,"

according to the website China Culture, earning her the nickname "Grandmother of the New Wave" when she was only 30.

Varda "joined a group of French socialists and professionals invited by then Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai for a trip around China in 1957, when China was still a relatively closed country," according to Xinhua.

Varda took photographs in Beijing and Shenyang, then

went to southern cities like Kunming and Wuhan.

Her focus was ordinary Chinese people. She also purchased hundreds of souvenirs and had them shipped back to France.

"All these objects have made the return trip 55 years later," she is quoted by China Culture as saying. "The past and the present coexist naturally in the pavilion."

Varda's exhibition is currently in Wuhan.

Adopted sisters searching for Chinese birth parents



Bonnie Ward with little Creighton

By Zhao Hongyi

An American adopted two Chinese girls in three years, but she discovered something strange about them: as they aged, they became remarkably similar, as if they were twins.

A DNA test proved they were indeed from the same womb.

When they came of age, they grew curious about their birth parents. So their step parent promised to help them find their roots in China. A search has narrowed down the possible birthplaces to two counties in Chongqing, which is where the search is being conducted.

A story that appeared in the *Chongqing Economic Times* has rallied locals to help this American fulfill her promise to her daughters. But will anyone step forward?

Adopting two girls more than 10 years ago

Bonnie Ward, 48, is a single mother and information technology executive living with her mother and two adopted Chinese girls in New Hampshire. She loves China and toured the country once, making many Chinese friends along the way.

In June 1998, she learned from the Chinese Kids Adopting Center in Beijing, an institute under the Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs, that a girl had been abandoned and was available for adoption.

Two months later, in August, Ward came to China and saw the little girl at the Changde Social Welfare Institute – also known as “Orphanage” – a center for helping infants, the disabled and elders.

“I found the little girl so cute, with big eyes but bare-headed,” Ward recalled.

The girl had been abandoned two months earlier because a palpable tumor was found on her head. She had just received an operation to remove the tumor.

Ward finished the paperwork and was able to bring the girl back to the US. She gave her daughter the English name Creighton.

“Creighton is so clever! She learned English quickly,” Ward said.

In October 2001, Ward took Creighton back to the orphanage in Changde and adopted another one-year old girl that the orphanage received the girl only 10 days prior.

Ward brought that girl back to the US with her as



Reilly and Creighton



Photos provided by Bonnie Ward

well, and named her Reilly.

Happy life in the US

As the two daughters matured, Ward found that they looked exactly alike, with round faces, big eyes and remarkably similar eyebrows.

Two years later, Ward carefully and seriously studied the pictures of her daughters. “They look like the same person!” she recalls.

In 2002, Ward took the two to receive the DNA test, and the result confirmed her suspicion.

“It’s really a miracle, totally beyond our expectation,” Ward said.

She also felt angry that there was a mother who could abandon her own daughters.

“Creighton is almost 15 years old now, tall, healthy, likes running, jumping and taking many courses in her school,” Ward said. “Reilly is 11 and likes tennis and the viola.”

The two sisters are both

cute, clever, healthy and mix in with each other very well, according to Bonnie.

Ward took a Chinese surname for her daughters – “Chang,” as in the word Changde, where Ward adopted the kids. It’s also the character in her Chinese name: Chang Baoning.

Strong desire to meet natural parents

When the sisters grew up, they inquired about their birth mom.

“They want to tell their own parents that they live well and are lucky,” Ward said, “and to tell them to not worry about their daughters.”

“I personally won’t bring any trouble to their natural parents, just try to share the pictures of the sisters growing up and tell them that their daughters miss them very much,” Ward said. “And I would express my gratitude

to them for sending me such lovely sisters.”

Over the past decade, Ward has taken her daughters to China on multiple occasions, climbing the Great Wall, touring Beijing and visiting the pandas in Chengdu.

She has had her children participate in charity outings to support groups like the Changde Orphanage.

While Creighton and Reilly love China, the question still remains: who are their natural parents?

Ward said she remembers that staff members at Orphanage told her the girls were from Pengshui or Qianjiang.

One of her friends, Xu Chenglin, who works as a volunteer at the charity, began helping Ward by pasting notices in the two cities and getting a story published in the *Chongqing Economic Times*.

So far, no one has come forward.

Welfare home can’t help

According to records from the welfare home in Changde, one of the sisters was found in the second half of 1997 in Changde Normal University, while the other was from nearby Nanping Town.

“Therefore, the sisters might be natives of Changde City, Hunan Province,” said Liang Zhiyong, vice curator of the welfare institute of Changde.

Sources from the social welfare institute in Changde, however, aren’t able to help either.

The staff members who were working between 1998 and 2001 have all retired or passed away, according to the home office. They are glad to see Ward has returned to the home several times to volunteer and make donations, but they’re unable to help her in her quest.

“It’s very difficult to find the natural parents of adopted kids,” an officer surnamed Wang said. He said they would not put the kids up for adoption if they could find their parents.

He agreed that the two sisters might be from the two cities in Chongqing because the welfare homes in the two cities were in very poor conditions and many abandoned kids from there were sent the orphanage.

Wang was very surprised to learn that the two girls are natural sisters – but, unfortunately, not as surprised that they were put up for adoption.

“Ten years ago, people still had the traditional concept that boys are better than girls, especially in the countryside,” Wang said. “Many village families abandoned daughters in hopes of having a boy.”

He took down information about the sisters and promised to continue searching for their natural parents.

Workshop at Maker Carnival recruits creative types

By Liu Xiaochen

Iron Hack was one of the workshops at this year's Maker Carnival in Beijing, running last weekend. Open to the public, participants got the chance to design and make their own creations.

Workshop activities

Attendees of the Maker Carnival 2012, held in the Museum of Digital Arts of China Millennium Monument last Sunday could not only check out exhibitions, also try their hands in the festival's workshops.

One of the recently concluded ones was Iron Hack, founded by Dan Mikesell and Jihyun Song (co-hosted by Zhong Cheng).

This activity was structured like a competition. Six groups attended the workshop, including Chinese families, college students and foreigners from Australia and Germany.

They were challenged to use only materials they were given – chopsticks, scissors and tape – to create something creative or useful within two hours.

The results were impressive, including boats, clothes and other abstract works.

Song and the participants inspected each other's works, took photos and held discussions afterwards.

Iron Hack's history

Song came to China on April 28 and left two days later, just so she could run Iron Hack.

The idea for the workshop came from the competitive cooking program *Iron Chef*, Song said. In that show, professional chefs are challenged to prepare a series of dishes within a limited timeframe.

At the end of 2011, Mikesell and Song held a party with artists when the chopstick challenge was born. "There was no need for anything like structure or form or standard," Song said. "Something just came out from their hands right away."

And like that, the idea for a "makers workshop" was born.

Iron Hack follows Korea's World Class University plan, which was initiated by the government to increase educational activities. The government has recruited many foreign professors and scholars to achieve that end.

Dan Mikesell, a professor, was one of those recruits. He found the need to spread these kinds of "hacking" ideas and events. They found a space to get more people involved, and in that way, and Iron Hack has been growing ever since.

How organizers see makers

Song said her team introduced this idea to China because it was fun. It's a creative exercise that anyone can participate in, she said.

"Hacking" is not a difficult thing," she said. "By doing this, people can discover how everyday materials can be productive and recreated as something new."

The activity's slogan is "seeing is magical, making is cheerful."

Zhong, the co-host, said he thinks makers are the people who turn that idea into practice.



A group of foreigners discuss how to make their work.



Making a boat



A group of college students talk about their idea.

Photos by Liu Xiaochen

China to increase scholarships for international students

China's education authorities said they will increase the number of scholarships available to international students in the coming year.

The funding comes from the Chinese Government Scholarship Program, established by the education ministry. It will provide both full and partial scholarships to international students and scholars studying in China.

"The scholarship investment will at least be 1.5 billion yuan (\$238 million) in the coming semesters from 2012 to 2013," said Zhang Xiuqin, director of the ministry's department of international cooperation and exchange.

The average scholarship will increase 20 percent, from 50,000 yuan to 60,000 yuan.

"We plan to expand the coverage of the scholarship to more students," Zhang said.

Every year, the department of international cooperation and exchange draws up an admission plan and sends it to Chinese embassies and consulates overseas.

Applicants can also find information on the website of the China Scholarship Council (en.csc.edu.cn) and apply for the scholarship at the Chinese embassy or consulate in their home countries.

Chinese language students and foreign teachers who majored in Chinese can apply for scholarships as well, especially those applying for HSK, Chinese testing, culture research and short-



The number of foreign students in China is increasing fast.

Photo by Mu Wen/CFP

term programs.

Those with full scholarships are exempt from tuition, accommodation fees and material cost, and receive living allowances, free medical service and settlement subsidies.

There are currently 290,000 students from 190 countries and regions studying in China.

According to the ministry, 25,687 international students were under the Chinese Government Scholarship Program in 2011, an increase of 15 percent from 2010.

Self-financed international students

increased 10 percent to 267,000 in 2011.

Since 2010, the ministry published a 10-year plan, setting the goal of attracting more than 500,000 overseas students to China by 2020, with 150,000 receiving higher education.

"In 2010, we launched a project with the US government that plans to sponsor 100,000 US students coming to China for either short-term study or for a Master's program by 2013," Zhang said.

In 2011, there were 23,292 US students studying in China, with 2,094 receiving government subsidies. (Agencies)

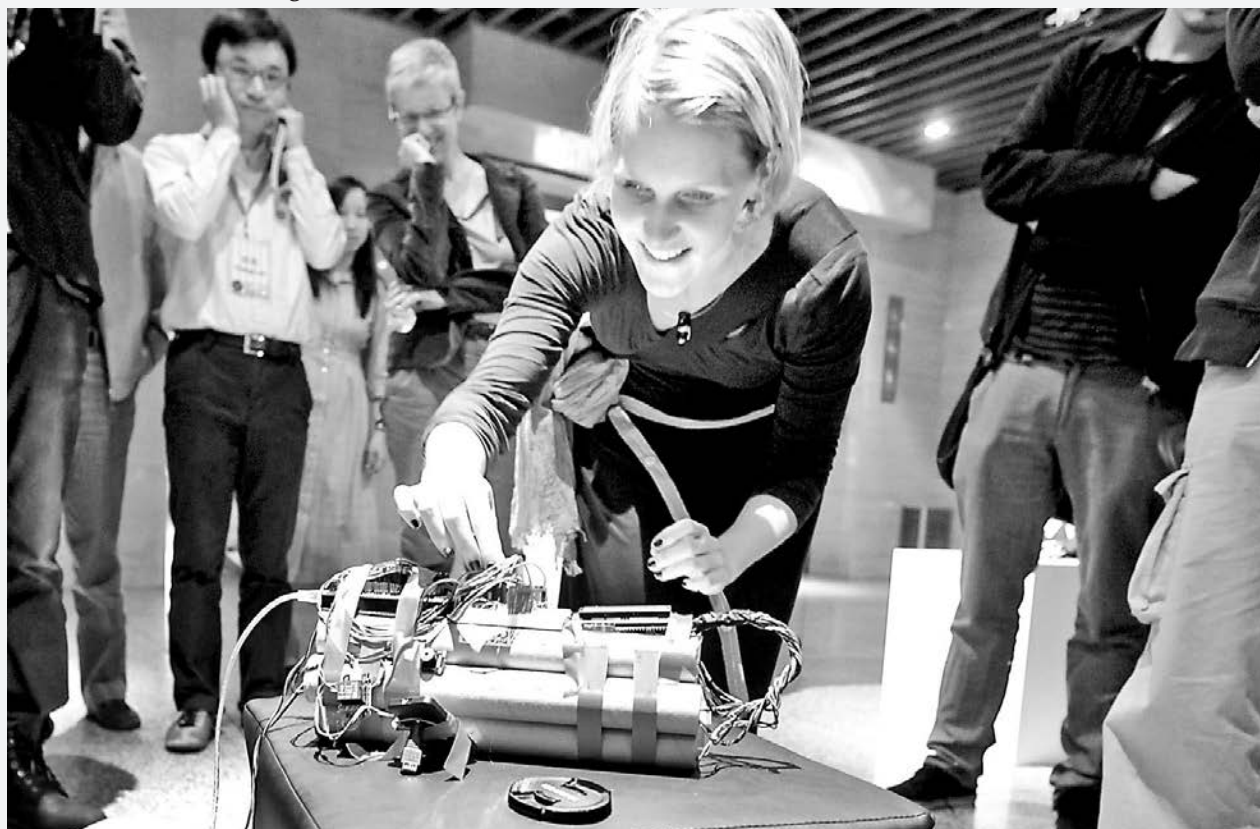
Maker carnival

The first Maker Carnival opened at the China Millennium Monument Museum of Digital Arts on Wednesday. More than 80 makers participated in the event, showing off 50 of their creations. Makers are people who enjoy creating things but care little about their works' commercial value.

Where: China Millennium Monument, 9 Fuxingmen Lu, Haidian District

When: Until May 12

Tel: 6851 3322 Wei Ying



A visitor experiences how to disarm a bomb.

Photo by A Jing/CFP

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyi@ynet.com

I recently decided to go vegan, and now I'd like to know what Chinese foods contain eggs, milk, fish oil and other animal products.

Vegans can safely eat rice, tofu, all vegetables and fruits. However, it's not completely safe to eat at low-end Chinese vendors or restaurants because the concept of "vegan" is non-existent. Some restaurants will use eggs in baozi, or bread, or pork oil. Cook for yourself or try known vegetarian restaurants like Pure Lotus or Vegan Hut.

This year, I moved from the 22nd floor to a six-floor building, and I've come to understand the annoyance of mosquitoes. I have some serious reactions to mosquito bites. How can I keep them away from me?

You can buy mosquito repellent spray from any supermarket. When you are at home or work, try to burn mosquito repellent incense. You can also try electronic incense with or without fragrance. Most of the time, it works fine.

Beijing is so dry that I need to get a skin moisturizer. I'd like one that isn't greasy and doesn't have any strong fragrance or smell. I'm a guy, so I don't know what to buy. Back in Hawaii, I didn't need any moisturizer, just sun cream.

Try Cetaphil lotion for sensitive skin without fragrance. You can find it at Sasa on the ground floor of Sanlitun Village. To enhance the skin care result, use some exfoliate products before you apply the moisturizer.

We want to find a place for really inexpensive but good quality furniture. We have tried IKEA and South Third Ring Road's Furniture Town. Any more suggestions?

For Chinese furniture, you can visit Gaobeidian Furniture Street or Xianghe Furniture Town, though it's really far away, in the suburbs. You can take Bus 938 from Beijing Railway Station there.

(By Wei Ying)

Film the next

Festival drives discussion of soft power

By Huang Daohen

China will need a lot of soft power if it hopes to disassociate itself from being identified with cheap, Made-in-China goods. Officials are hoping that power can come from film.

Last week, some 4,000 movie industry movers and shakers – many from Hollywood – piled into the capital for its annual film festival. The week of screenings prompted many thoughtful discussions on the future of the Chinese film industry.



Liu Yifei



Zhang Ziyi



Zhang Jingchu



Fan Bingbing



The weeklong second Beijing International Film Festival ended Saturday night at the Olympic Park.

Small film Olympics

April is usually a quiet time for the film market – but not this year.

On April 23, the eve of the second annual Beijing International Film Festival, the British Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra wowed listeners at the Olympic Park with its renditions of songs from *Titanic*, *Lord of the Rings* and *Harry Potter*.

Outside the concert hall, the park was awash in film nostalgia.

The municipal government organized the week-long film festival with the same gusto it did the 2008 Olympics, inviting 4,000 film professionals from home and abroad for the event. Among the big names to come were directors such as the legendary James Cameron and the Academy Award-winning Rob Minkoff, and Chinese actors Andy Lau, Zhang Ziyi and Jiang Wen.

More than 300 films from home and abroad, including the award-winning Iranian film *A Separation*, played for free on 500 screens around the city.

For many of the films, including *A Separation*, the festival marked their mainland debut.

"I learned a lot about the movie online. I was eager to see it, but no Chinese cinemas were

playing it," a film goer surnamed Wang said he planned to use the festival to see films that are hard to find on the Internet.

"Today's film goers are no longer satisfied with big-budget Hollywood flicks. They want to see something different and distinctive in cinema," he said.

Industry boom

But the government has bigger plans than satisfying Wang's taste in film.

"Beijing hopes to use the festival as an opportunity to share the country's film industry with the world and turn itself into a global center of cultural capital," vice mayor Chen Gao said at the opening ceremony.

Cameron agreed. "The festival will be a milestone in the history of Chinese film development," he said.

On his rare visit, Cameron said he would work to forge relations with more Chinese filmmakers and open a Chinese headquarters for his 3D technology company Cameron Pictures in Tianjin.

John Textor, head of special effects at Digital Domain, announced plans to introduce his company's technology to the mainland through the launch of a joint project with the Chinese company Galloping Horse.

export?



at the Beijing Olympic Park, with a concert featuring music from classic films (above).

IC/CFPhotos

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Rob Minkoff, director of the Academy Award-winning *The Lion King*, said he has already been working on a film called *Chinese Odyssey* to tap the domestic market.

"Like Paris in the 1920s, Beijing is having its world moment right now," Minkoff said. "If you're in the movies and you haven't been to Beijing, you're kind of missing where things are really happening."

The Hollywood legends' confidence has strong statistical backing: the National Film Association reported that China's box-office revenues totaled more than 13 billion yuan last year.

During the first quarter of the year, China also overtook Japan as the largest foreign market for US films — partly thanks to its continued theater expansion. The country had 10,700 cinema screens nationally, and with rapid construction is expected to have 13,000 by the end of this year.

Accounting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers said it expects the total spending on all forms of film entertainment in China to grow to \$133 billion by 2015.

According to the organizers, last week's festival generated more than 5.2 billion yuan in contracts for film projects — an 88.7 percent increase over the 2011 festival.

Dull Chinese films?

But money is not the problem for the Chinese entertainment industry.

Compared to foreign filmmakers, Chinese are still minor players in the global film market.

Wang Zhongjun, founder and CEO of the Huayi Brothers film company, knows the pain all too well.

"Over the years of cooperation, we've mainly seen foreign companies coming to China with no interest other than how much money they can make," he said. "When I ask how much revenue they can bring in for us from the overseas market, they remain silent."

Wang said a bestselling Chinese film can gross \$100 million (630 million yuan) at home, but it will take a mere \$480,000 in the US.

Last year, the country exported 16 Chinese films to the North American market. They took less than \$3.5 million in box office sales combined. By comparison, India sent 30 films to the US that earned \$20 million at the box office.

"Due to cultural difference and a lack of international operating experience, Chinese films are hard to export," Wang said.

Yu Dong, the founder and CEO of Nasdaq-listed Bona Film Group, said the blame rests

more with quality than cultural differences.

"[Chinese films] are generally unsatisfying," he said. "Nowadays, the domestic film industry is trying hard to develop marketable films, but these lack international influence."

In the past, Chinese films such as *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon* and *Hero* attracted global attention. However, it has been a long time since domestic films won any international awards.

Yu said that while American investors are optimistic about the Chinese film market, they say Chinese filmmakers could stand to learn a lot from their international peers.

"That's the reason we chose to get listed on the Nasdaq," Yu said. "When we want our films to enter a new market, we have to learn what the individuals in that market like and want."

The top advice Yu has received from his foreign counterparts was simple: be entertaining.

"Film goes in the US are mainly between the ages of 15 and 30. They see movies for entertainment, and rarely appreciate challenging or dull exotic films," Yu said.

"While China does have a long history and lots of stories to tell, we have to package it in a way that is exotic and appealing to foreign viewers," he said.

Strength of the common man captured in oil



Xin Dongwang

Photos provided by China Oil Painting Society

By Charles Zhu

Although Xin Dongwang made a name for himself by winning the golden prize at the 10th national exhibition of arts, he has never forgotten his humble beginnings.

Xin hails from the small Xinjiafang village in rural Hebei Province and uses fellow farmers as the subjects in his amazing oil paintings. His portrayal of common life shows a profound understanding of rural life and mentality.

Anyone who sees *At the Breakfast Stand* is immediately moved by the vividness of the scene, in which a host of people sit at the table in candid postures. The people appear composed in front of their simple fare – paradoxically so given the hurried background.

It was this oil painting that won Xin fame in 2004.

Xin was born in Kangbao County, Zhangjiakou, Hebei Province in 1963. He worked as a coal miner, a print shop designer and a roaming sketch artist before being admitted into the department of arts of the Central Shanxi Normal School. After two years of study, he was assigned to teach at a normal school in Datong.

He went to teach at the department of arts of Shanxi Normal University in 1990 and at the oil painting department of the Tianjin Academy of Arts in 1999. He is now teaching at the School of Arts at Tsinghua University.

Xin's rich life experience provides the best soil for his artistic development. His oil "Cheng Cheng" that portrays the migrant workers on their way to work in the city won a silver prize at the China Second Annual Oil Painting Exhibition in 1995.

The farmers, with their clumsy bundles of luggage, sit and wait for someone to come and pick them up or rest en route to their urban destination. Their faces reflect their expectations of a better life and the uncertainty ahead.

In portraying the common folks, he attaches more importance to the rugged, or more accurately the ugly. He forgoes superficial beauty for mental aesthetics. A number of his portraits show people who, behind coal-smudged faces, shine with strength and hope.

Xin said he believes in realism, and that China's process of social transformation is the most fertile soil for his art.

He said that the realist spirit demands an artist have a strong social consciousness and awareness of his responsibilities. He once wrote, "It is life that imbues me with strong artistic impulse and provides me



with spiritual depth." He said that realist art should be a critical and just force that will be able to inspire society to go forward.

It is precisely the idea and willpower that drive an artist to produce excellent work.

"I'm an artist who is very much moved by his leit-motif," he said. "I know this is a very backward idea in the modern art movement. However, my experience in life makes me keenly aware of social beings, especially the embarrassing conflicts between the city and the countryside."

He works in portraits because "man is the governor of society and only man can reflect social culture and history," he said. "It is my mission to catch the spiritual state of a man and imbue it with cultural significance."

To find more inspiration, Xin has been looking back to his hometown to find more rosy-tanned people for-

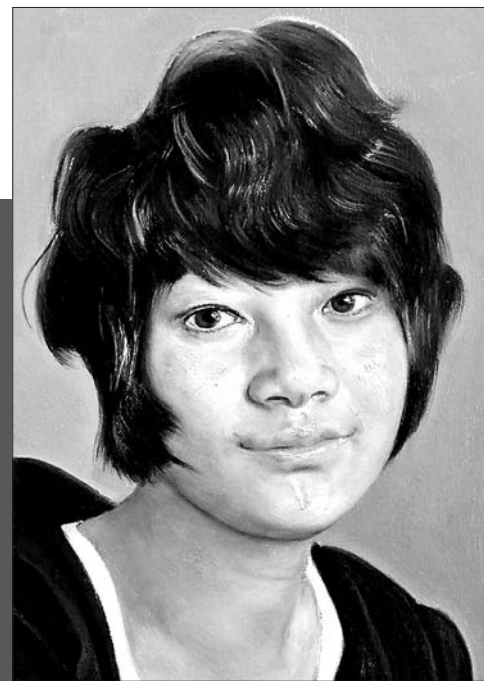
gotten by art – people who don't fit the 1950s stereotype of the industrious, simple and kind farmer.

He went to his hometown twice in 2004 to draw portraits of villagers who he knew. After being away for 20 years, he found it difficult to communicate with them even though he knew each person's merits and faults.

Xin sat in an 8-square meter room filled with crude tobacco smoke and smoke from a coal stove as he sketched his subjects in one piece titled *Father and Son*.

In the summer of 2004, he made a trip to the farming area in Tianshui, Gansu Province, where he found that the spirit of social transformation had struck deep into the minds of the farmers he drew.

He said the realism that drives his work is not a trend that will fade, as it originates in the heart of each artist.



“In spite of this general ignorance of China’s graffiti scene, Chinese artists are already working at a very high level to produce unique and original works.”

Discovering Beijing’s graffiti scene

PAINT BEIJING.

GRAFFITI IN THE CAPITAL OF CHINA

涂鸦



Indie film



Photos by
Buddy Lewinsky

Lance Crayon shooting at Guomao Photos by Sam Scroggs

By Zhang Xiaoran

While many pass through China and write a book or shoot a movie to focus on cultural differences, filmmaker Lance Crayon chose to focus on something that is less different: graffiti.

Crayon discovered China’s love of the art in December 2010 while working as a video journalist at China Radio International (CRI).

CRI sent him to cover a pop art festival in Sanlitun, where he was amazed by the walls of fresh graffiti in the parking garage below the event’s main hall.

The experience inspired him to shoot a documentary about graffiti art in spite of knowing virtually nothing about the artists behind it.

He eventually settled on interviewing 28 artists in Beijing, some of whom were already famous abroad. Together, those 28 make up almost the entire local graffiti scene.

He initially followed two graffiti artists from Europe who have been doing their art in the capital. Over six months, they helped spread the word about the project and encouraged Chinese artists to trust him enough to come forward and make their work known.

Although China has no strict laws to prohibit graffiti, the art is not technically legal.

Crayon’s documentary is in the final stages of editing, and he plans to screen it this summer at independent

theaters throughout the city.

Spray Paint Beijing marks Crayon’s debut film as a director, although he had 10 years of experience working in the US film industry before he came to China.

He said that of the many documentaries on graffiti art he has seen, none has mentioned China. But in spite of this general ignorance of China’s graffiti scene, Chinese artists are already working at a very high level to produce unique and original works, Crayon said.

The documentary was self-funded and completed with the aid of two hired helpers: an editor and a translator. He shot the video himself using a camera he bought in Beijing.

Crayon said his next documentary will follow three local heavy metal and rock bands.

Two trailers for *Spray Paint Beijing* are available on Youku, and can be found under the keyword [spraypaintbj](http://spraypaintbj.com).

Crayon said he plans to remain in China with his wife, who is Chinese, and to continue producing more films about the country from an expat’s viewpoint.

He maintains a YouTube channel where he shows his work to viewers who live abroad at youtube.com/user/texasagent99.

Detailed information about screenings of *Spray Paint Beijing* is available at www.spraypaintbeijing.com and on Crayon’s Weibo microblog, weibo.com/u/2304080845.

Start your own indoor vegetable farm

This week, *Beijing Today* invited Pan Dinghao, a 20-something man who works in the fertilizer business, to share his experience of building a home vegetable garden.



Cucumber



Tomato and strawberry



Hops



The container is made from a used wine box.

Photos by Pan Dinghao



The container from a used peanut oil bottle



Pan's small balcony farm



Pan Dinghao

By Pan Dinghao

Living in Beijing to me means facing many cold, windy and dry days in both the winter and early spring. There aren't enough blue-sky days, and when a sandstorm hits, gray is the only color in the sky.

One day this year, I decided to change this situation and bring some "happy" colors to my apartment by building an indoor "farm."

Within three months, I was able to see the fruits of my labor. My balcony is lush with adorable and eatable greens.

Starting an indoor farm is easier than you might think. We need the right materials first, though: containers, soil, seeds and fertilizer.

Containers

Anything that can hold soil and has small holes to let extra water seep out can be used as a container. Try flower pots, polystyrene

foam boxes and wood boxes. It's better to maintain at least 20 centimeters of soil in the container to leave the plant roots enough space.

I love drinking good wine, so I use wood wine boxes. Drill some holes at the bottom, and you'll find these boxes work great.

Soil

Quality clean soil will lead to healthy plants. One can find free soil from parks, but they usually contain insect eggs or weeds and have poor structure and fewer nutrients than clean rich soil purchased from the flower market.

When buying soil from the flower market, I also recommend purchasing some small stones, which should line the bottom of the container. It'll help with water drainage.

Seeds

Because we grow vegetables indoor, where the temperature is more or less constant, we have a wide range of seeds available to us. During springtime, we can grow all kinds of vegetables: white turnip, lettuce, spinach, celery, parsley, green onion, cucumber, tomatoes, strawberries and basil.

Make sure you have checked how much light each type of vegetable needs and choose the right type to grow at your place. You can sow seeds directly on the surface of the soil and cover with 5 millimeters of soil, or you can sow seeds separately in other small containers and move them back after they've grown out their leaves. For tomatoes, remember to keep more than 30 centimeters of distance between two seeds so that they have enough space to grow.

Fertilizers

All plants need 17 basic nutrient elements and one beneficial element to grow. When any kind is lacking, it needs to be replenished. There are different types of fertilizers at the market, and you can even make your own organic fertilizer with kitchen waste. Recipes can be found online.

Combination of traditional and innovative Cantonese cuisine

By Annie Wei

More Cantonese restaurants are opening up in the central business district (CBD) as a result of customers' emphasis on healthy consumption. Among them, Cuisine Cuisine (Guojinxuan) is one of the famous brands in Hong Kong.

Occupying half of the International World Financial Center's second floor, the restaurant offers delicately prepared dishes and a quiet environment.

Executive chef Chow Ngai has 30 years of experience in top Hong Kong restaurants like Fook Lam Moon and Cuisine Cuisine at the Miramar.

He said the main difference between these two restaurants is that Fook Lam Moon focuses on traditional dishes while Cuisine Cuisine is more innovative.

One of the must-have is shuijin juhua daxiaqiu (298 yuan), crystal prawns shaped like chrysanthemums. The prawn is selected from the coast of southeast Asia and each weighs at least 300 grams.

Prawns are carefully cut, then marinated with hot stock. This way, they obtain a texture that's similar to lobster but more tender.

Chow said the restaurant's specialties include roasted young pig, served in front of guests in the same way that Peking duck is served. Chow said the dish in Beijing is even better than in Hong Kong.

"In Beijing, we sourced a quality supplier to provide fresh pork, but we can only get frozen pork in Hong Kong," Chow said.

Chashao, barbeque pork (128 yuan), is also available at the Beijing outlet.

The restaurant offers a business lunch set menu (starting from 138 yuan)

as well. We like its fried peas, lily roots and lotus roots wrapped in shrimp balls (128 yuan). The shrimp is chewy and the peas are fresh and sweet – a delicious spring dish.

Its fish tofu and vegetable sprouts (128 yuan) are a must-try as well. The fish meat is smashed, mixed with egg white and flour. To ensure freshness, the restaurant only uses one fish to make fish tofu for the day and it sells out quickly.

We also liked its fried noodles with ginger and scallions (180 yuan). The noodles are from Hong Kong, very slim but chewy.

For dessert, Chow's stewed peach resin and papaya (80 yuan) is highly recommended. Unlike stewed snow clams and papaya, common traditional sweet desserts in Cantonese restaurants, peach resin papaya is rare in Beijing.

Like all Cantonese restaurants, Cuisine Cuisine has nice soup and quality seafood. But this restaurant does not promote its shark fin products, "a concept that more and more Chinese here have adopted for the endangered species concerned," Chou said.

Ben Man, vice president of the restaurant business Miramar from Hong Kong, said they tried to adopt local culture but mingle it with an international service standard.

"In Hong Kong, we have much bigger spaces for the main dining area," Man said. "The customers here prefer more privacy, so we have more private rooms."

All service staff are from the hotel and management school in Guangxi. "It's because both provinces share a lot more in common with Cantonese cuisine, and to make sure the restaurant delivers the food in the right way," Man said.

Cuisine Cuisine (Guojinxuan)

Where: 2/F west tower, Beijing World Financial Center, 1 Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District
Open: 11 am – 10 pm
Tel: 5981 7576



Stewed peach resin and papaya, 80 yuan

New outdoor beer gardens

By Annie Wei

Once again, it's barbeque and outdoor party time in Beijing. We've found two new spots where you can enjoy a nice afternoon tea or beer with good service.

Beer garden at Traders Hotel

This cafeteria has had a nice garden for many years, a quiet space – with Wi-Fi – for reasonably priced coffee and afternoon snacks.

The hotel has decided to attract more customers this summer by launching a new beer garden, equipped with picnic tables and parasols. Its seasonal menu includes the Traders special chicken wings, barbeque skewers, Asian appetizers and crispy summer salads.

Beer Garden

Where: Traders Hotel, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District
Open: Until October 30, 10 am – 10 pm
Tel: 6505 2277 ext. 36

Hopfenstube of Crowne Plaza

The opening of Hopfenstube, the German restaurant and brew house in Crowne Plaza at U-Town, Chaoyangmen, is good news for office workers in the area who need an after-work drink.

The restaurant not only has a rotating lunch set menu, but also different main courses every workday, with salad and coffee or soft drink at 58 yuan.

We recommend its four types of beers: lager, wheat, dark and the brewmaster's seasonal. You can pair it with pork knuckles or German sausages.

Hopfenstube

Where: Crowne Plaza, 3 Sanfeng Bei Li, Chaoyang District
Open: 10 am – midnight
Tel: 5909 6688



Photo provided by Crowne Plaza



Fried noodle with ginger and scallions, 180 yuan
Photos by Zhou Xu

Rent

1br apartment at Gongsan Plaza, Sanlitun

The Shimao Gongsan International Center, also known as Gongsan Plaza, is a new compound housing people and businesses and providing them with meeting and entertainment opportunities.

This 103-square-meter apartment is located in the heart of Sanlitun, close to the Sanlitun Village and opposite Workers Stadium. It is conveniently located beside many shopping malls and restaurants.

The interior has one bedroom and one living room. There is an open kitchen, a big French window, refined decorations, wooden and marble floors and a balcony.



Rent: 12,000 yuan per month
Tel: 15321548300
Email: daisy201172@yahoo.com

Hotel

"Love, Forever" 2012 IHG Beijing Hotels Wedding Fair

Eleven IHG Beijing cluster hotels are hosting a wedding fair at Crowne Plaza Beijing Chaoyang U-Town on May 13. Planned events include a hotel wedding facility and service exhibition, a wedding dress fashion show and a chance to meet with professional wedding planners.

Participating hotels include two Inter-Continentials, four Crowne Plazas and five Holiday Inns located throughout the capital. From traditional weddings to modern Western ceremonies and from delicate family parties to banquets with thousands of guests, each hotel is experienced in making wedding day memories that will last forever.



Where: Crowne Plaza, Beijing Chaoyang U-Town, 3 Sanfeng Bei Li, Chaoyang District

When: May 13
Tel: For free tickets, contact 5993 8158

Marriott International and Galaxy Entertainment announce Ritz-Carlton, JW Marriott in Macau

Marriott International and Galaxy Entertainment Group signed a long-term management agreement for more than 1,300 rooms, suites and floating villas at two landmark luxury hotels operated by Marriott International to anchor the second phase of Galaxy Macau.

The Ritz-Carlton, Macau and the JW Marriott Hotel Macau are expected to be Marriott International's first in Macau. The company said it plans to open a hotel each month in China during the next three years. At the end of the first quarter, Marriott's pipeline of hotels either under or approved for construction in China was 54 hotels. The hotels will have a total of 17,000 rooms.

Galaxy Macau has established itself as the key leisure and resort destination in Macau, offering three world-class hotels and more than 55 restaurants, cafes, bars and lounges in Phase 1 of its Macau development.



The Ritz-Carlton, Macau will feature 250 one- and two-bedroom suites, including the stylish The Ritz-Carlton suite. Designed in a traditional Ritz-Carlton style, the hotel anticipates to be sought out by those who value luxury and innovation together with incomparable levels of privacy and intimacy.

The hotel will provide the same impeccable service for which the brand is famous, and will be located on the top floors of the Galaxy Macau.

Sunworld Dynasty Hotel wins the Most Popular Star Hotel Award

Sunworld Dynasty Hotel Beijing was named the Most Popular 5-Star Hotel of the Year at the China Tourism Award Ceremony 2011 in Qingdao. The awards were supported by China Urban Media Tourism Alliance and 22 national newspapers.

Located in downtown Beijing on Wangfujing Avenue, Sunworld Dynasty Hotel is a 395-room hotel that has been operating for 20 years. It is well known for its convenient location and quality service.



Dining



Satisfy your craving for baby lobsters and oysters

Authentic Australian baby lobsters and Canadian oysters have arrived in Beijing. This May, try Summer Palace Master Chef Kenny Chen and Xing Qing Hou's special menus.

Dishes on the Canadian Oyster Menu include braised oysters with Garlic Sauce; steamed oysters with black bean and chili sauce; deep-fried oysters with a spicy herb and sweet potato vegetable salad; baked oysters with ginger and spring onions in a superior broth with fried noodles; and pan-fried diced oysters with egg, Chaozhou style.

The Australian Baby Lobster Menu consists of steamed baby lobsters with minced garlic; baked baby lobsters with minced eggplant and black truffles; baked baby lobsters in superior broth; baked baby lobsters with cheese; and boiled baby lobsters in millet soup with black rice.

Where: Summer Palace, China World Hotel, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: Until May 31
Tel: 6505 2266 ext. 34 for reservations



Strawberry and cream tea at the Lobby Lounge

Join our elegant tea party as we indulge in the tradition of afternoon tea with a range of delights from its very birthplace. British classics such as apple crumble, fruit cake, scones, clotted cream and jam will grace the silverware at Lobby Lounge this May.

As in China, tea is more than a mere drink in Great Britain: it is a way of life.

Delve into the Lobby Lounge's afternoon tea menu and pair each item with fresh strawberries and vanilla cream or the new white chocolate lemon tart created by the hotel's award-winning team of pastry chefs.

Where: Lobby Lounge, China World Hotel, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: Until May 31

Cost: 298 yuan for afternoon tea (15 percent gratuity), including two teas or coffees from the menu. Champagne Afternoon Tea is also available.

Tel: 6505 2266 ext. 37 for reservations

(By Jackie Zhang)

Fri, May 4



Exhibition Notes of Reflection

The works of this exhibition are from photographer Zhu Yinghao and Deng Yun. Three parallels link the exhibition: first, it is the comparison of Zhu's and Deng's works; second, each photographer has two groups of works on display; and third, there are inner connections between the works.

Where: Chambers Fine Arts, Red No. 1 D Caochangdi, Chaoyang District
When: Until May 6, 10 am – 6 pm



Admission: Free
Tel: 5127 3298

Maker Carnival 2012

This marks the first time Maker Carnival has come to Beijing. All kinds of works will be on display as artists, designers and engineers converge on the China Millennium Monument.

Where: China Millennium Monument of Digital Arts, Yuyuantan Nan Lu, Haidian District

When: Until May 12, noon – 10:30 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 5980 2222



Sat, May 5

Exhibition

About materials collections

The UK-based Archive of Modern Conflict collects material dating from prehistoric times to the present days. As the subject matter and topics multiply, they intersect in surprising ways to reveal stories about the nature of our world. This exhibition brings together a selection of various photographic works that illuminates forgotten corners of our cultural life.

Where: Chambers Fine Arts, Red No. 1 D Caochangdi, Chaoyang District

When: Until May 6, 10 am – 6 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 5127 3298

Movie

Die Artisten in der Zirkuskuppel: Ratlos

Alexander Krueger is a famous director and screenwriter, producer, actor, film theorist, critic, scholar, entrepreneur and social critic, directed this film in 1968, the year it won the Golden Lion Award. It won a German Film Award in 1969.

Where: UCCA, 798 Art District, Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7 pm
Admission: 15 yuan
Tel: 5780 0200



Sun, May 6

Nightlife Agnes Kain

Chanelle Afford and Stefan Simunic, who grew up together and write songs with tacit agreement, make up Annes Kain, a folk group from Australia. Their second album, *Across the Ocean Grey*, will be released in China during their tour.

Where: Yugong Yishan, 3-2 Zhang-zizhong, Dongcheng District
When: 8 pm
Admission: 80 yuan
Tel: 6404 2711

Drama The Yellow Storm

Director Tian Qinxin's drama is based off Lao She's well known novel *The Yellow Storm*. The actors include Zhu Yuanyuan, Xin Boqing, Qin Hailu, Tao Hong and Hou Yansong.

Where: The National Grand Theater, 2 Xi Changan Jie, Xicheng District



When: 7:30 pm
Admission: 200 yuan
Tel: 6655 0242

Salon Luo Yijun

This is a salon about Luo Yijun's new book, *Memory from My Future Second Son*. Luo, who was born in 1967, is one of the most important novelists in Taiwan. His novels include *Xixia Hotel* and *I Love Luo*.

Where: University Teaching & Research Leaders, 19 Xueyuan Nan Lu, Haidian District

When: 8 pm

Mon, May 7

Admission: Free
Tel: 5880 6183

Drama Li Bai

The contemporary playwright Guo Qihong, who has published nearly 50 works, including poems, novels and

essays, has written a play based off Tang Dynasty poet Li Bai. The director of this play is Su Min, also an actor and drama instructor.

Where: Room 218, Zhongxinyuan Building, 12 Zhongxin Jie Yi, Dongcheng District

When: 7 pm
Admission: 180-580 yuan
Tel: 400 880 2880



Tue, May 8

Concert Peking University Accordion Orchestra Concert

This concert is held by Peking University Accordion Association (PUAA), which was founded in 2009. The members in PUAA train and give shows in their spare time. This year, it plans to hold an activity called "Orchestra Tour," providing concerts and lectures to the public.

Where: Peking University Hall, 5 Yiheyuan Lu, Haidian District

When: 7 pm
Admission: 180-580 yuan
Tel: 400 880 2880



Salon Hand-painted mask

Last year, organizers of this salon presented a lecture about Peking Opera. This year, the topic will be about the masks that performers wear. Before attending, participants will be given some mask templates, and afterwards, and they'll be given the chance to don the mask and give a show.

Where: Mei Lanfang Theater, 32 Pinganli Dajie, Xicheng District

When: 7:30 pm
Admission: 50 yuan
Tel: 13301010105



Wed, May 9

Nightlife Shirota Yu

Shirota Yu is an actor popular among young people who's appeared in commercials, TV shows, movies and theater. He first became a star in 2005 after appearing on a TV serial. In 2011, he released his first song in Europe.

Where: Haidian Theatre, Zhongguancun Dajie 28, Haidian District

When: 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-480 yuan
Tel: 400 610 3721



Thu, May 10



Nightlife Zac Sax Trio

The Zac Courtney Sax Trio is one of Beijing's hottest contemporary ensembles. The members are drummer Zac Courtney, saxophonist Wang Liming and bassist Yuan Ye. They play

almost exclusively original jazz. The freestyle beats of the Australian jazz drummer ties them all together, and the result is one awesome ride.

Where: Jianghu Bar, 7 Dong Mianhua Hutong, Jiadaokou Nan Jie, Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 6401 5269

(By Liu Xiaochen)

15

Next week

BEIJING TODAY Editor: Zhao Hongyi Designer: Zhao Yan

Capital's lone remaining royal theater towers



Qingyinge Theater

CFP Photos

By Charles Zhu

The Forbidden City and Summer Palace are two of the most recognizable tourist spots in Beijing, yet even longtime residents may not be aware of the historical value of certain "theater towers" that are inside.

Deheyuan (moral harmony) Theater in the Summer Palace and the Changyinge (Pavilion of Pleasant Sound) Theater in the Forbidden City were part of five special three-storied towers where music was played and dramas performed. They're the only two remaining – and well worth a visit.

The other three towers were the Qingyinge (clear music) Theater in the Old Yuanmingyuan, the Qingyinge (clear music) Theater in the Summer Palace in Chengde, Hebei Province and the theater in front of the Shou'an (longevity and peace) Palace in the Forbidden City.

The Changyinge (Pavilion of Pleasant Sound) Theater was for the pleasure of the emperor, his concubines and his queen, built in the Ningshou

(quiet and longevity) Palace in front of the Yueshi Tower on the northeast part of the Forbidden City.

Constructed in 1772, the 37th year of the Qianlong Emperor's reign, the theater was the place where royal family, courtiers and high-ranking officials entertained themselves by watching theatrical performances on traditional festival days.

It is said that the Empress Dowager Cixi of the late Qing Dynasty liked to go to Changyinge Theater to watch operas in the company of the emperor, the queen, the emperor's concubines and maids, as well as princes and high-ranking officials. Her 50th birthday in 1884 was commemorated here at a steep price: roughly 5,500 kilograms of silver for the theatrical garments and stage props alone.

The three-storied theater is 20.7 meters high and is built on a 1.2-meter-high base with a total floor area of 686 square meters. Its roof consists of yellow glazed tiles.

The top floor is called Futai, the platform of happiness, the middle Lutai, the platform of official's pay, and the ground floor Shoutai, the platform of longevity. The ground floor where the play is staged is 210 square meters and features 12 columns.

There are four covered dry wells on the four corners and one with water in the middle. Whenever the plot requires, water may be pumped out from the middle well and actors may enter the stage from the dry wells. For instance, in the drama *Golden Lotus from Out of the Earth*, four big lotuses emerge out of the dry wells with a Buddha sitting in the middle of each of the lotuses.

In front of the stage is the Yueshi Tower, which faces south, where the emperor and the queen and royal concubines used to sit to watch the dramatic performances.

Deheyuan is the other Qing royal tower that has withstood the wear and tear of time. Standing 22 meters in the Summer Palace, it was built in

1891, the 17th year of the reign of the Guangxu Emperor, meant to be a copy of the Changyinge Theater in the Forbidden City.

It is the best-preserved and architecturally most grand ancient theater tower left in China.

It lies northwest of the Renshou (benevolence and longevity) Palace. Its ground stage has 14 square meters with a 10.1-meter-deep brick well. Around the well are five one-meter-square pools with a depth of 1.3 meters.

Work on the theater began in 1891 in preparation for the celebration of Cixi's 60th birthday. In addition to halls for the dressing of actors and actresses and rooms for the spectators, it covers a total floor space of 3,851 square meters. The project required 35,500 kilograms of silver.

It was here where Cixi watched Peking Opera, one of her favorites. Her enjoyment of the art brought about a golden age of Peking Opera, and made stars out of actors such as Tan Xinpei and Yang Xiaolou.



Deheyuan Theater is a must-visit for those who fancy Chinese culture.

